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Top Climate Scientists Warn Governments Of 'Blatant Anti-Nuclear Bias' In Latest IPCC Climate Report

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Energy

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Climate scientists Tom Wigley and Kerry Emanuel; radiation expert Gerry Thomas ^{EP}

Some of the scientists most often cited by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have taken the unusual step of [warning leaders of G-20 nations](#) that a recent IPCC report uses a double standard when it comes to its treatment of nuclear as compared to renewables.

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“The anti-nuclear bias of this latest IPCC release is rather blatant,” said Kerry Emanuel, a climate scientist at the [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#), “and reflects the ideology of the environmental movement. History may record that this was more of an impediment to decarbonization than climate denial.”



at University of California, Santa Barbara, and Peter Raven, Winner of the National Medal of Science, 2001.

“Such fear-mongering about nuclear has serious consequences,” the authors write. “As IPCC itself acknowledges, public fears of nuclear are behind the technology’s slower-than-desirable development.

The letter signers include leading radiation experts who expressed outrage that the IPCC had claimed a link between nuclear power stations and leukemia when in reality “there is no valid evidentiary support for it and the supposed connection has been thoroughly dismissed in the literature.”

“Public fear of nuclear drove the panicked over-reaction to past nuclear accidents,” they note, “including mass evacuations, which health experts agree had a far larger negative impact on human health than the low-levels of radiation that escaped from the plants.”

In fact, note the letter authors, which include Gerry Thomas, a Professor of Molecular Pathology at Imperial College London and co-founder of the Chernobyl Tissue Bank, there is “higher radiation exposure from coal plants and the manufacturing of solar panels than from nuclear.”

The authors of the open letter aren’t the only ones finding evidence of anti-nuclear bias in the IPCC report. The day after the letter was published, physicist Jani-Petri Martikainen published [an analysis](#) showing that IPCC modelers restricted the role of nuclear by assuming a scarcity of uranium — something that has not been a concern since the [late 1950s](#) but has been a talking point of anti-nuclear campaigners [since the 1970s](#).

In other instances, Martikainen finds, IPCC modelers assume uranium mining comes to a halt for an unspecified reason. “For some weird reason, humanity stops mining uranium even when the fuel cost is still massively lower than for fossil fuels,” Martikainen writes.

Such manipulations disturb climate modelers like Wigley. “There are a number of productive climate scientists who are ideologically opposed to nuclear,” he explained. “In some cases this stems from early associations with Greenpeace or Friends of the Earth (or similar organizations).”

The signers, who include nuclear weapons expert and Pulitzer Prize-winner Richard Rhodes, criticize the IPCC’s claim “that the ‘use of nuclear power poses a constant risk of proliferation’ even though no nation in history has ever created a nuclear weapon from civilian nuclear fuel under inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The letter signers note that the report raises concerns about nuclear waste, “without



metals including lead, chromium, and cadmium, and which in most of the world lack safe storage or recycling.”

In addition to inputting future uranium shortages as an assumption, physicist Martikainen [noted](#) that IPCC modelers assume large cost reductions for solar and wind but none for nuclear, gross overestimates of efficiency (capacity factors) for wind, and gross underestimates of efficiency for nuclear.

Martikainen notes that if IPCC modelers removed the uranium scarcity assumption, “Nuclear power would end up dominating the energy supply. I have a feeling that resource constraint was introduced specifically for this reason. Modellers first did their calculations without the constraint and ended up with a result that they found distasteful.”

Concludes Martikainen, “I suspect that modellers worked backwards and set the resource limitation based on the maximum share of the energy supply they were ready to grant for nuclear power. Not cool.”

Other signers of the letter include a growing list of pro-nuclear non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from around the world, including Environmental Hope & Justice, Climate Coalition, Anthropocene Institute, Energy for Humanity, the Ecomodernist Society, Saving Our Planet, Mothers for Nuclear, Voices for Nuclear, Nuklearia, Ren Energi Oplysning, and Partei der Humanisten

Defenders of the IPCC report noted that many of the scenarios in the recent report call for the expanded use of nuclear energy, something the letter authors acknowledge.

“While many of the scenarios in the IPCC report call for the expanded use of nuclear energy,” the signers noted, “the report nonetheless repeats misinformation about nuclear energy, contrasts nuclear negatively to renewables, and in some cases, suggests an equivalency with fossil fuels.”

Climate scientists say including nuclear in the models is a poor excuse for the overall bias of the report. “This is a big deal,” said Wigley. “Dishonesty in any branch of the science that underpins the global warming issue taints us all. Dishonesty must always be exposed. If not exposed, lies can persist and damage the truth for a long, long time.”

*I am a Time Magazine “Hero of the Environment,” Green Book Award Winner, and President of Environmental Progress, a research and policy organization. My writings have... **MORE***

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